

VEDANTA: THE CONCLUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

From the Rituals of the Vedas to the Philosophy of the Upanishads

THE UTTARA MIMAMSA: HIGHER INQUIRY INTO REALITY



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The Architecture of Wisdom

The Context

Early Vedic practice focused on '**Karma Kanda**' (Rituals)—precise construction of altars and calculation of planetary positions. This gave birth to geometry and mathematics.

Vedanta shifts the focus to '**Jnana Kanda**' (Knowledge)—moving from the outer geometry of ritual to the inner geometry of the **Self**.

The Three Pillars (Prasthanatrayi)



Vedanta concerns itself exclusively with the knowledge portion (Jnana Kanda) of the Vedas.

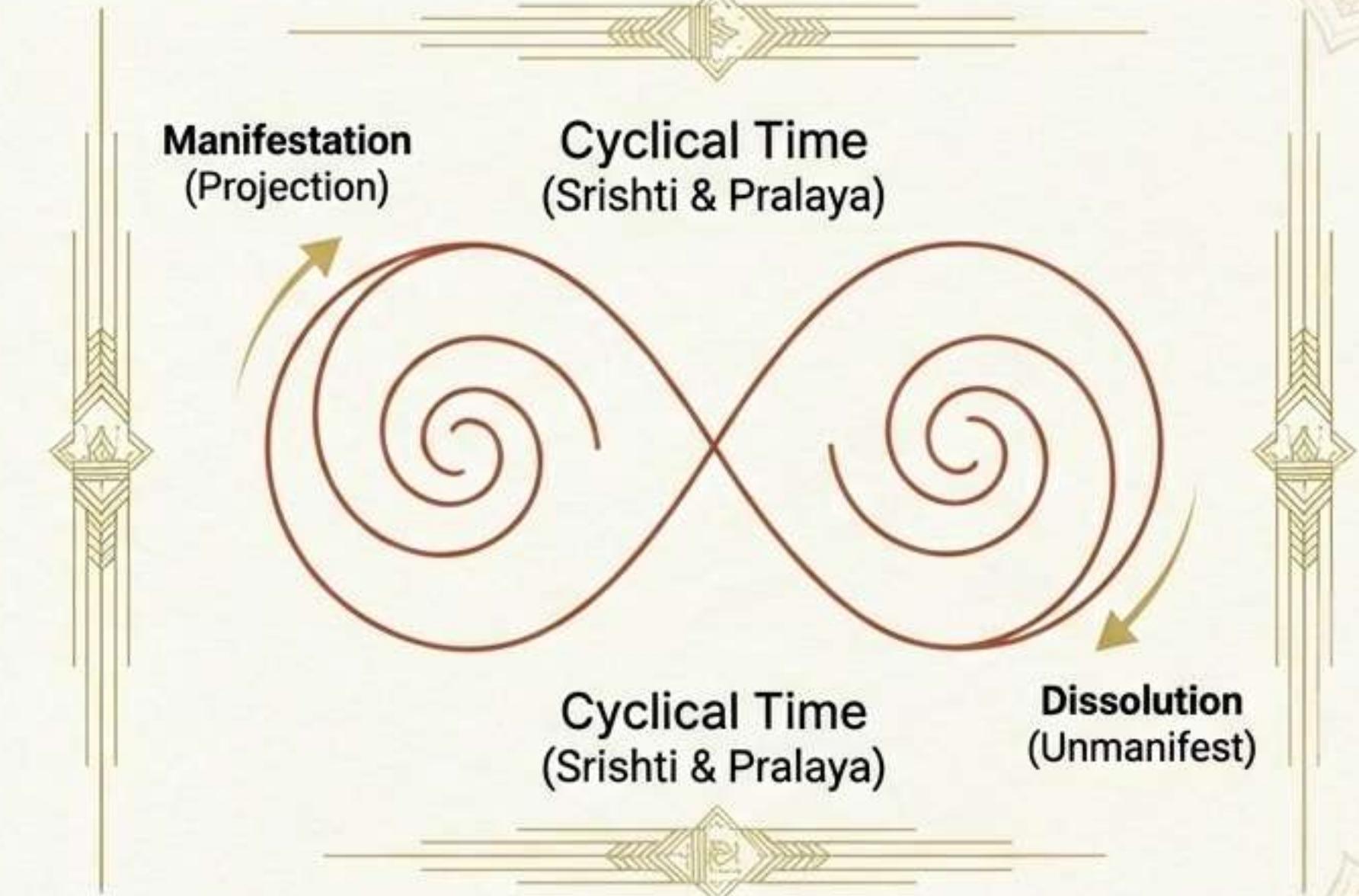


The Metaphysics of Time and Space

The Universe is not a creation from nothing, but a **projection**.

SPACE: Infinite in extension.

TIME: Eternal in duration.



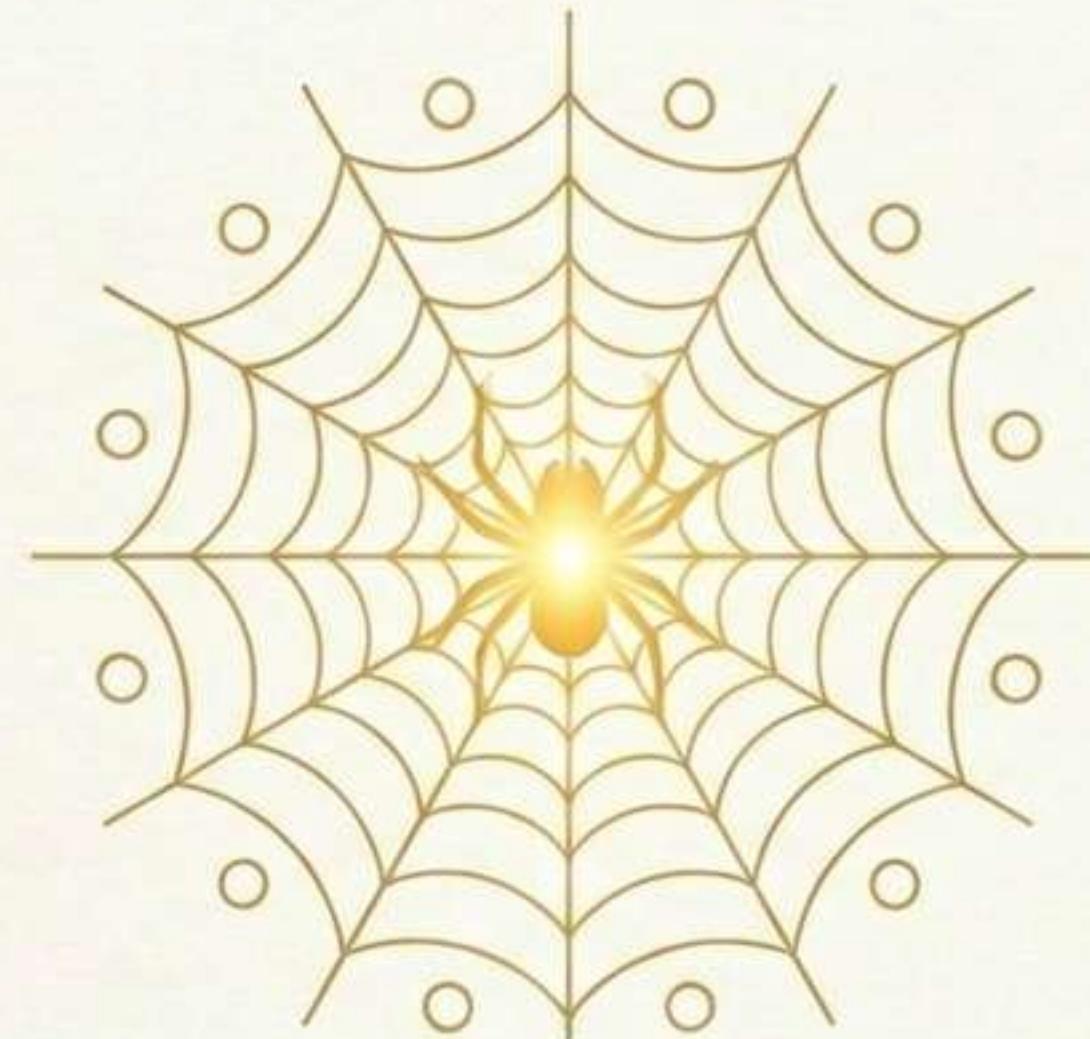
“The expression of the Infinite in the finite... has happened infinite times, is happening, and will happen.”



Brahman: The Ultimate Reality

Brahman is the Absolute.

Definition: **Sat-Chit-Ananda** (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss).



The Spider Analogy: Material & Efficient Cause

Just as a spider spins a web out of its own substance and withdraws it, Brahman projects the universe from Itself.

Two Aspects:

1. **Nirguna**: Attribute-less, Pure Consciousness.
2. **Saguna (Ishvara)**: The Personal God, Creator & Governor.



The Atman: The Unborn Self

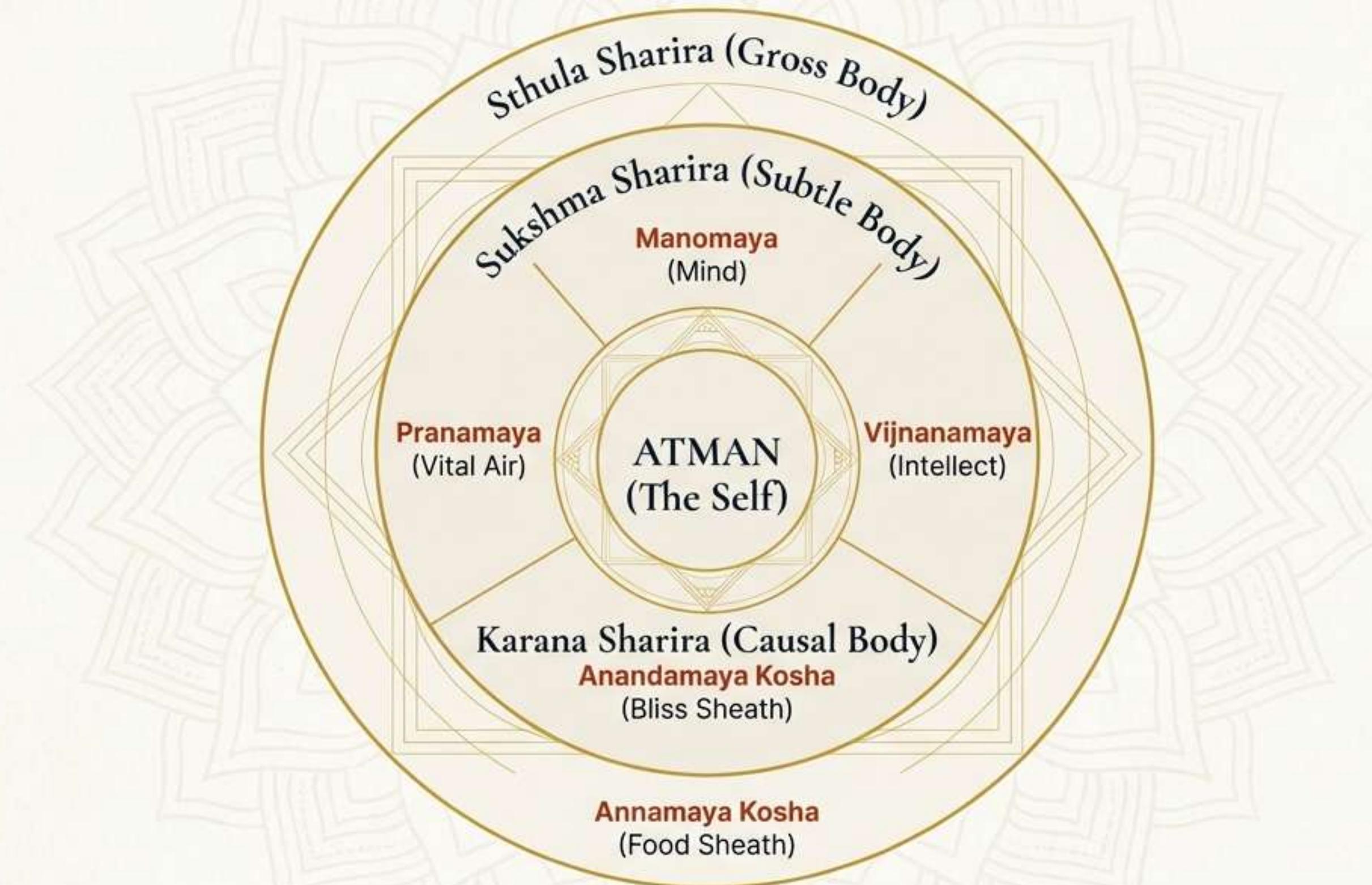


“Amritasya Putrah”
(Children of Immortality)

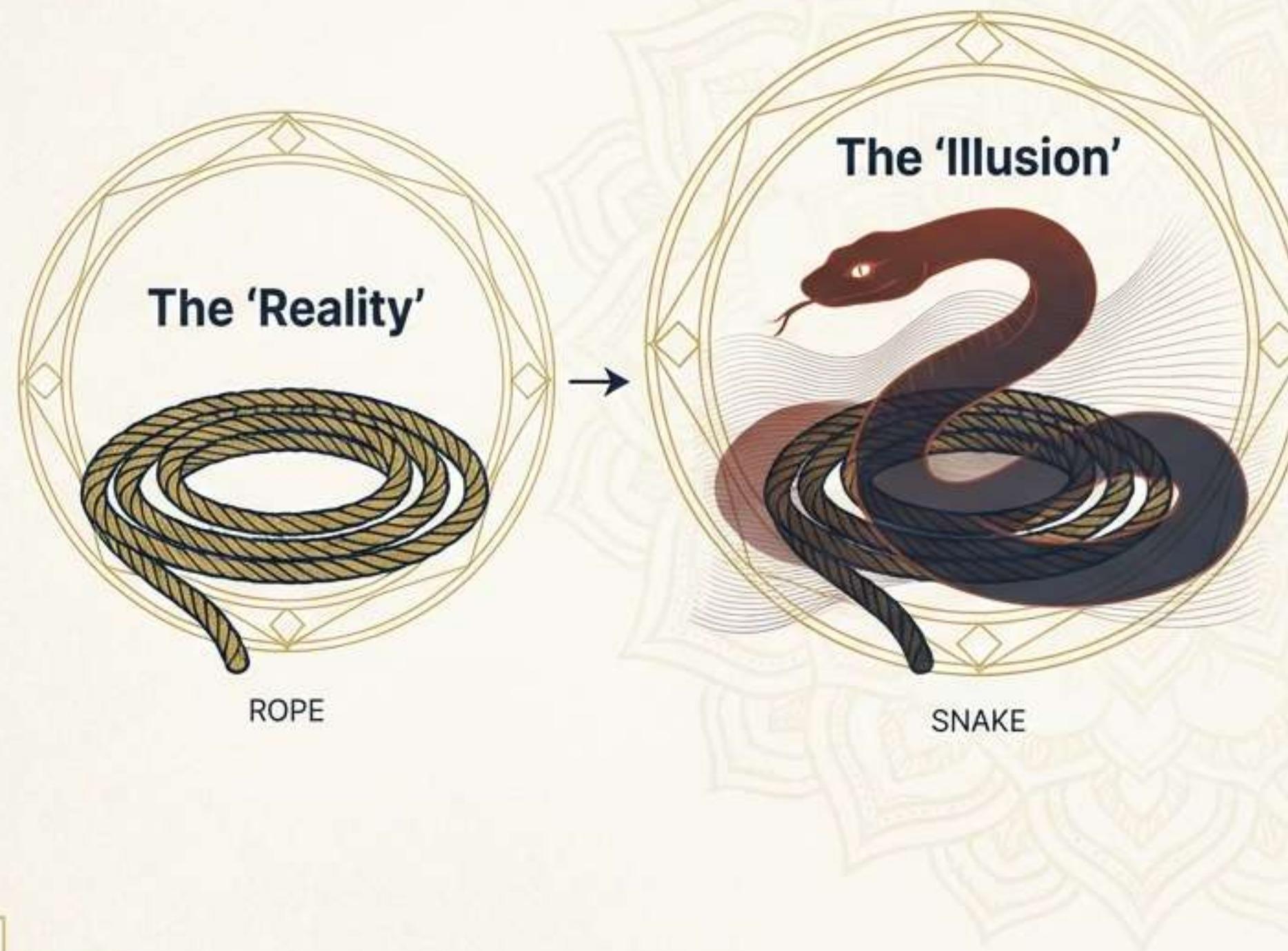
- The Human Soul (Atman) is **Eternal, Unborn, and Undying.**
- It is not “created” at birth; it enters the body.
- Growth and decay belong to the body; **the Atman is the witness.**



The Threefold Architecture of the Individual



The Problem: Avidya (Ignorance) & Maya



Why do we suffer? Because of **Avidya (Ignorance)**. We mistake the '**costume**' (Body/Mind) for the '**actor**' (Atman).

The Mechanism: **MAYA**

The cosmic power of illusion that **projects** the Many upon the One.

Vivartavada (Apparent Causation):

Just as a man in the dark mistakes a **rope** for a **snake**, we mistake **Brahman** for the world. The snake is '**Mithya**'—neither absolutely real nor absolutely unreal.



Pramanas: How Do We Know?

Valid Means of Knowledge in Vedanta



Pratyaksha (Perception)

Direct experience through the senses.



Anumana (Inference)

Logical deduction (e.g., smoke implies fire).



Shabda (Scriptural Testimony)

For metaphysical truths (Brahman) that cannot be seen or inferred, the Veda is the valid means.

Secondary Means: Upamana (Analogy), Arthapatti (Derivation), Anuplabdhi (Non-perception).



The Great Debate: The Drop and the Ocean

The relationship between the Individual Soul (Jiva) and the Universal Soul (Brahman)

MONISM
(Advaita)



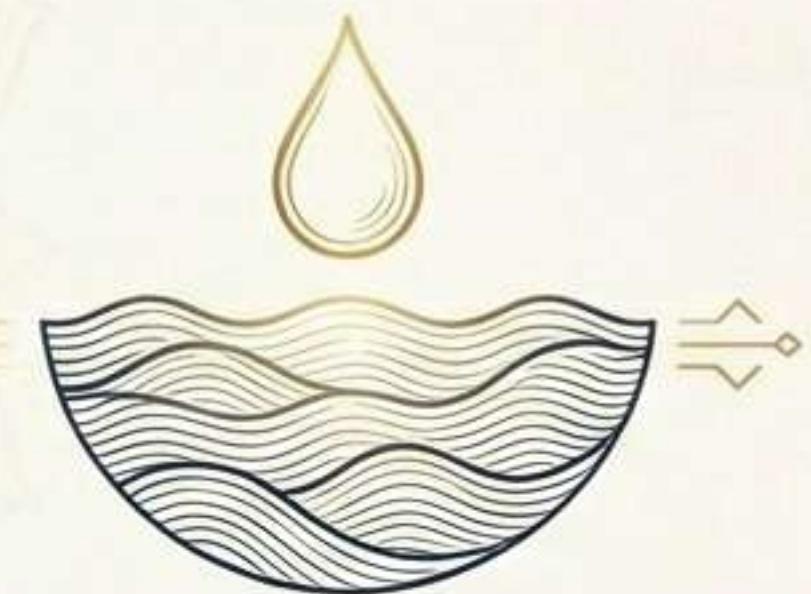
Identity. The Drop
IS the Ocean.

QUALIFIED MONISM
(Visistadvaita)



Organic Unity.
The Drop is **part of** the
Ocean's body.

DUALISM
(Dvaita)



Difference. The Drop is
distinct from the Ocean.

Is the individual **distinct** from God, a **part of** God, or
identical to God? This question defines the **schools of Vedanta**.



Advaita: The Philosophy of Non-Dualism

Proponent: Adi Shankara (788–820 A.D.)

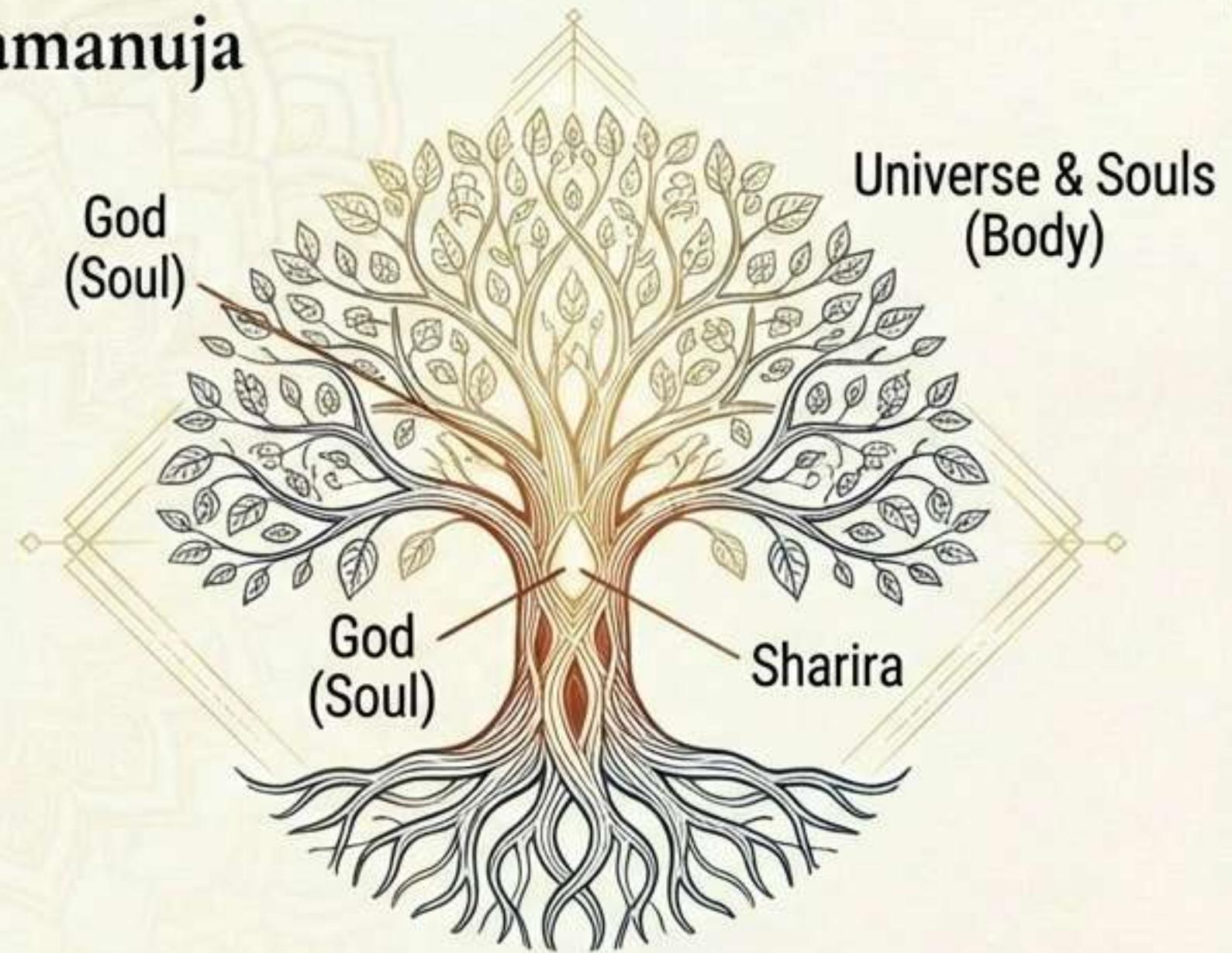
- Doctrine: Absolute Identity
- **Brahma Satyam**: Brahman alone is real.
- **Jagat Mithya**: The world is apparent/illusory.
- **Jivo Brahmaiva Naparah**: The individual is none other than Brahman.
- Theory of Causation: **Vivartavada** (Apparent Modification). The world is an appearance of Brahman, not a chemical change.
- Goal: **Jnana** (Knowledge) – Realizing you were never separate.

ONE
without a
second

Visistadvaita: Qualified Non-Dualism

Proponent: Ramanuja

- Distinct but Inseparable.
- Theory of Causation: **Parinamavada** (Real Transformation). Brahman transforms into the world (like milk into curd) without losing essence.
- Goal: **Bhakti** (Devotion) and Surrender.



Organic Unity (Sharira-Shariri Bhava)

God is the Soul; the Universe and Souls are His Body.



Dvaita: The Philosophy of Dualism

Proponent: Madhvacharya

- **Brahman** (God) and **Atman** (Soul) are two different entities.
- The Soul is a reflection (Pratibhasa) of God, dependent entirely on Him.

The Five Eternal Differences:

1. God vs. Soul
2. Soul vs. Soul
3. God vs. Matter
4. Soul vs. Matter
5. Matter vs. Matter



- Goal: Service and Grace (Prasada).



The Spectrum of Thought

Other Schools and Nuances

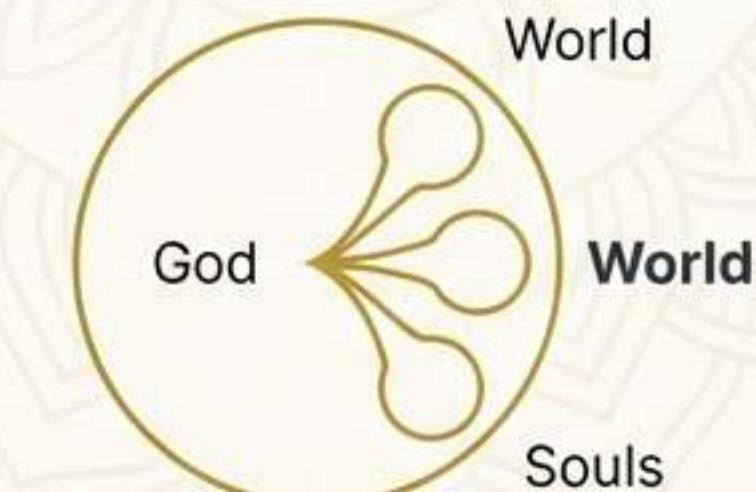
Dvaitadvaita (Nimbarka)

Natural Difference & Non-difference. The soul is both different and non-different from God, like a wave is to the ocean.



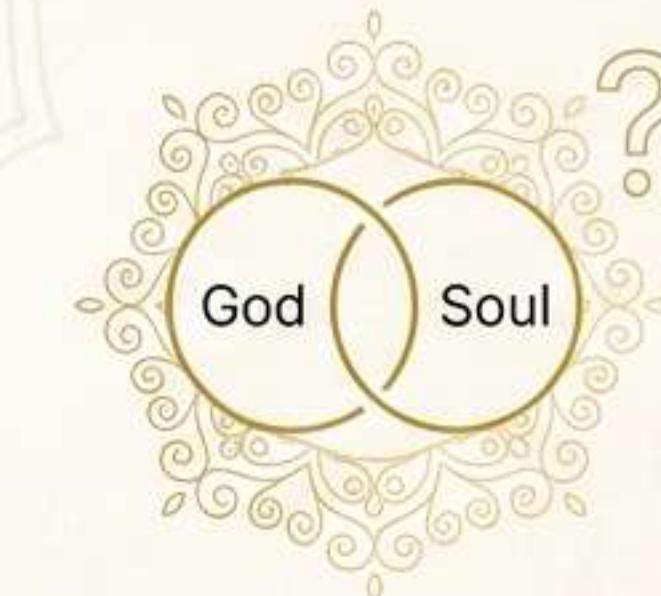
Suddhadvaita (Vallabha)

Pure Non-dualism. The world is real and is a manifestation of God's essence—not an illusion.

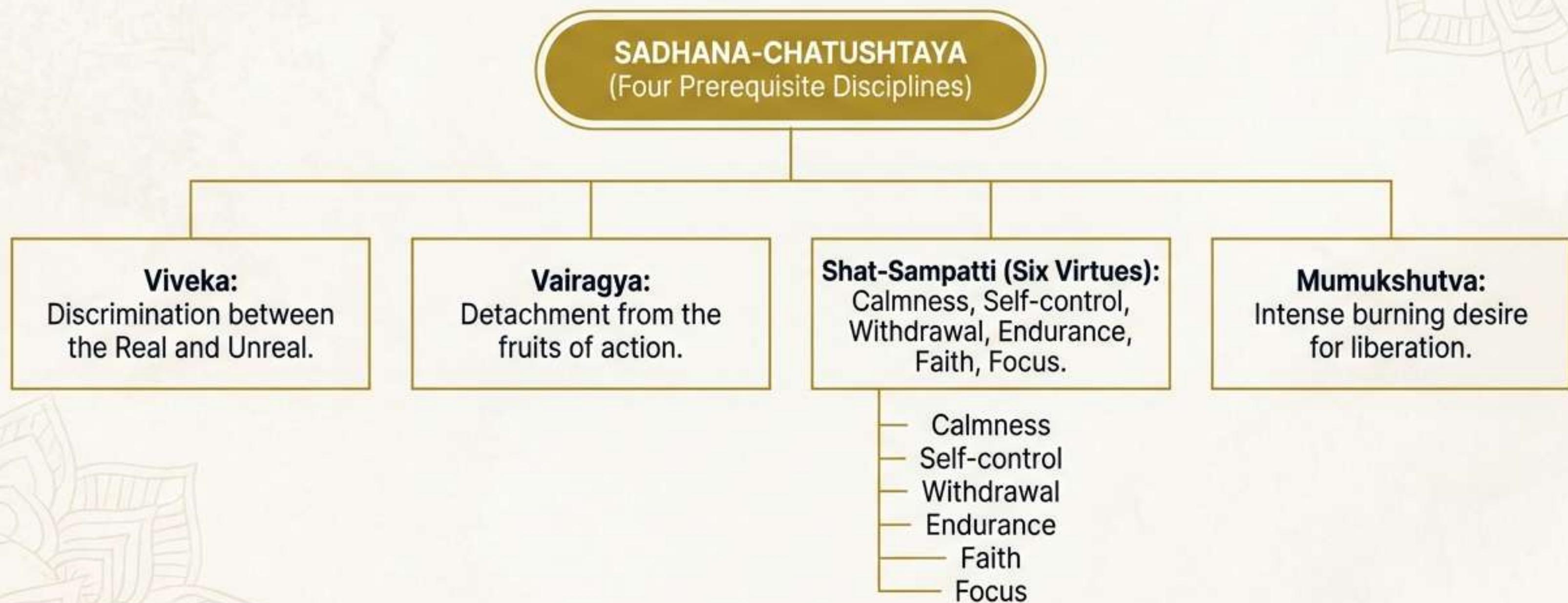


Achintya Bheda Abheda (Chaitanya)

Inconceivable One-and-Different. The relationship between the Soul and God is beyond human logic.



The Path: Qualifications for Knowledge



Educational Aim: 'Chitta Vritti Nirodha' — Control of mental modifications to prepare the mind for Truth.



Moksha: The Final Goal

The objective is to break the cycle of Samsara (birth and death)
and attain **Moksha (Liberation)**.

It is not 'becoming' something new, but '**realizing**' what you always were.



‘O Children of Immortality, hear me! I have known that Great Being
who is beyond all darkness. By knowing Him alone, one transcends
death. There is no other way.’

— *Svetasvatara Upanishad*

